Milvus ictinus (Savign.). Kite.

A common bird all over the country, apparently more numerous during the breeding-season; I shot several at various times.

Milvus migrans (Bodd.). Black Kite.

Not uncommon about the Devna lakes and in the Pravidy valley; but I seldom observed it much higher up the country. One specimen, a fine male, I shot as high up as Kialdery; but it is rarely that they are seen north of the Pravidy valley.

Athene noctua (Retz.). Little Owl.

Common throughout Central Bulgaria; it breeds in the ravines between Kushetchen and Kialdery, and doubtless in many other similar situations.

Bubo maximus, Fleming. Eagle-Owl.

More or less plentiful throughout the country, but particularly so in the Pravidy valley. Nidification begins somewhat early, namely, about the middle of March. On the 12th of April, 1866, I took a nest containing two eggs and one young bird; I had previously shot the female, and shortly afterwards procured the male also; one of these eggs was so far incubated that I could distinctly hear the young bird chirping within its shelly prison; I placed this egg under a sitting Goose, and in three days it was duly hatched; I then carefully attended to the young bird, and fed it on raw meat chopped very fine. It went on well for about a week, when I was called away on business for a day or two, and had to leave it in charge of one of my servants. I gave him strict injunctions as to its treatment; but on my return I found my young Owl dead, my orders having been neglected.

XVIII.—*Notes on some new South-African* Sylviidæ.

By H. B. Tristram, M.A., F.R.S., &c.

(Plate VI.)

Having had several small parcels of South-African specimens of this very interesting family lately intrusted to me for discrimination by Messrs. Layard, Gurney, Verreaux, Sharpe, and others, I have been somewhat appalled at the very unsatisfactory state of our knowledge of the group *Saxicolinæ.* It is necessary to observe that in no class of birds is a large series of specimens so absolutely indispensable for the accurate discrimination of species. Many of the characteristics which have been relied upon by closet naturalists as specific distinctions will be found to be merely variations of sex or age—and this in characteristics which, in allied genera, are infallibly distinctive. For instance, in some dark-coloured species, the coloration of the head may be black, grey, or white—and this, so far as we can discover, simply from age, not sexual, and occurring in breeding birds in the same locality. This fact was brought prominently to my notice in the case of the North-African groups, both in the Sahara and in Palestine. I find it holds equally in the analogous species both from Scinde and from South Africa. I may mention, as cases in point, the variations in *Saxicola eurymelæna* and *S. monticola.* In the same way a comparison of a large series will show us that the proportion of white and black on the rectrices is very variable in individuals of the same species in some of the desert groups.

My examination of the series sent by Mr. Layard leads me at once to reject the specific value of *Saxicola castor,* Hartl. (P. Z. S. 1865, p. 747), which appears to me to be only one of the variations of *S. cinerea,* Vieillot, a species that has as many different phases of plumage as *S. monticola,* the young birds being rusty-brown, then blackish-brown, and finally assuming the uniformly cinereous plumage.

There are, however, in all the Chats some invariable points of distinction; among these I attach the chief value to the coloration of the rump, and to its extent, which appears to be invariable at all ages, presenting no sexual variations in the subgenus *Dromolæa,* generally differing in the sexes of the desert group of the *Saxicolinæ.*

Thus, in *Saxicola monticola,* we have at all ages the white epaulettes in the male, and in both sexes the narrow white rump; but, according to age, we find specimens otherwise wholly cinereous excepting their remiges and rectrices, others black, with an ashy head, others wholly black, some with the belly ashen, some black, and some with more or less white.

Among the species before me there are four which, so far as I am aware, are new and undescribed. The first of these (of which a figure is given) I propose to name after its discoverer, Mr. Arnott, and subjoin its description.

SAXICOLA ARNOTTI, sp. nov. (Plate VI.)

♂ Corpus totum superne et subtus nigerrimum; pileo plumis quibusdam albis intermixtis; fronte et linea superciliari alba; remigibus atris nec nigris; scapularibus læte albis; plumis longioribus apice fusco-nigris; cauda tota nigra; remige primo 1·5 poll., secundo 3 poll., octavum æquante, tertio ad septimum æqualibus: rostro, tarsis et pedibus nigris.

Long. tot. 7·2, rostr. a rictu ·8, al. 3·9, caud. 3, tars. 1·1.

Hab. Adam Kok's New Land (*fide* E. L. Layard).

SAXICOLA ATMORII, sp. nov.

Corpus totum superne et subtus fuliginoso-nigrum; uropygio tantum imo albo; remigum parte interiore fusco-nigra; rectricibus mediis nigris, lateralibus albis nigro terminatis, et extimæ rectricis externo pogonio ad unum pollicem nigro limbato; rostro, tarsis pedibusque nigris; remige primo brevissimo, secundo septimum superante, quarto longissimo.

Long. tot. 6·9, alæ a carp. 4·1, caud. 2·75, rostr. a rict. ·85, tarsi 1·05.

Hab. Damara Land (C. J. Andersson).

This bird appears to be the South-African representative of the Abyssinian *Saxicola lugubris*, Rüpp., and differs from it in its much greater size, in having the narrow white instead of the broader chestnut rump of that bird, and in the much less extent of the black bar at the extremity of the tail. I name this species after Mr. W. Atmore, a diligent observer of birds, as Mr. Layard's pages testify.

SAXICOLA MODESTA sp. nov.*

Caput et corpus totum superne pallide cinereum, subtus totum

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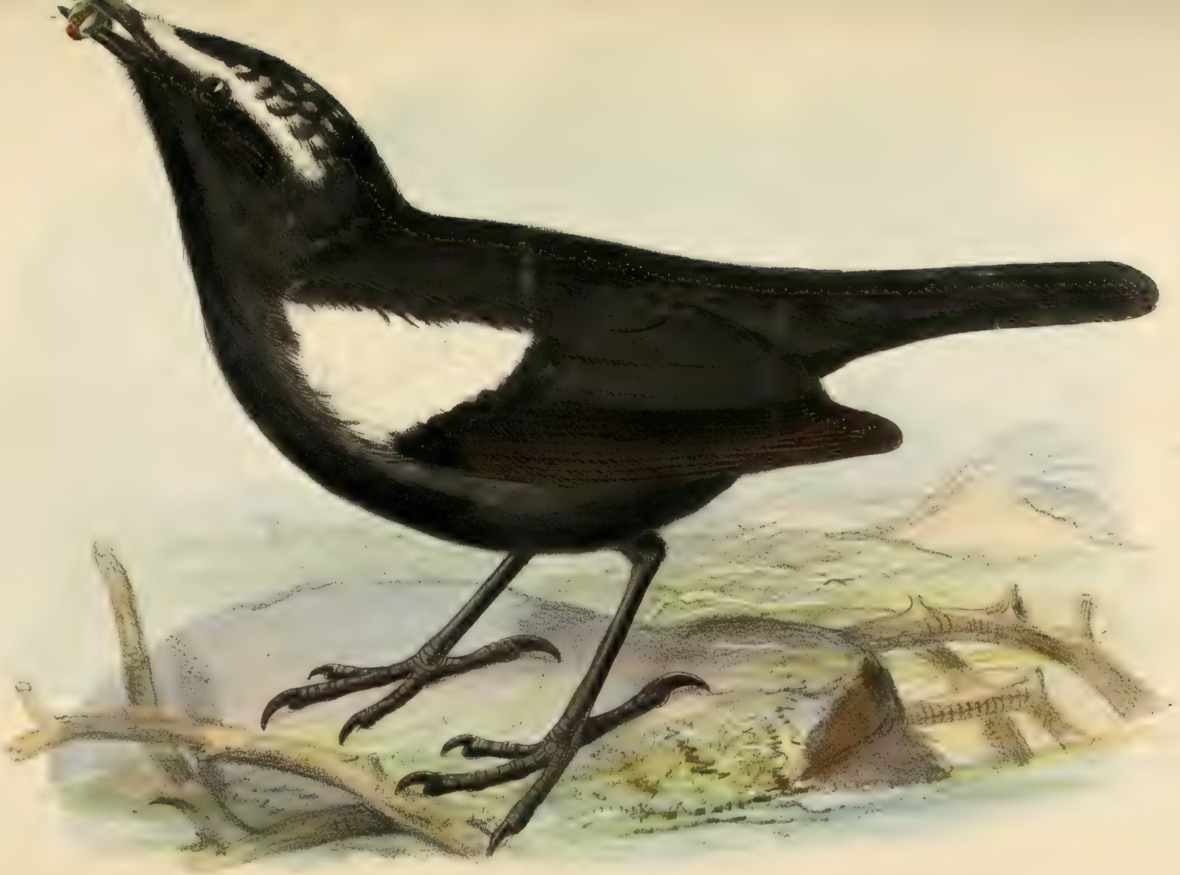
* It is possible that this species may be identical with the *Erithacus schlegeli* of Wahlberg (K. Sv. Vet. Akad. Förhandl. 1855, p. 213), though the bird is certainly not an *Erithacus*, but one of the *Saxicolæ* closely approaching *Pratincola*.



Keulemans lith.

M & N Hanhart imp.

SAXICOLA ARNOTTI

cinereo-album; remigibus fuscis, primo brevissimo, secundo sextum æquante, et ad pogonium internum subito attenuato; uropygio et crisso albis; rectricibus nigris, tribus externis albo colore pogonio externo et apice anguste limbatis; rostro, tarsis et pedibus nigris.

Long. tot. 6·2 ad 6·35, alæ a carp. 3·6, caud. 2·7, rostr. a rict. 0·7, tarsi 1·15.

Hab. Damara Land (C. J. Andersson).

This graceful bird in its form and coloration reminds us of the subgenus *Cercomela*, of which Palestine and Cashmere afford us the only known examples. I cannot agree with Dr. Jerdon that *Saxicola infuscata* betrays much affinity to that group, excepting in coloration. The white rump of *S. modesta*, however, must always mark it as belonging to *Saxicola* rather than to *Ruticilla*. Its nearest affinity seems to be with *S. pollux*, Hartl., which, though almost as slender in form, differs in its much larger size and very much darker coloration. The attenuation of the second primary at its tip will be sufficient to identify this species beyond any doubt. Superficially it somewhat resembles a specimen of *S. albicans*, Wahlb., from the same region, which, however, is by no means so slender a bird, wants the apical attenuation of the wing-feather, and has its rectrices for the greater part of their length white instead of black. I should add that I have not been able to meet with a specimen of *S. baroica*, Smith*; but it does not appear to possess the peculiarities of this species, of which I have *five* specimens before me.

DRYMŒCA ORTLEPPI, sp. nov.

D. supra pallide griseo-brunnea, flavo-brunneo lavata; gula, gutture et linea superciliari albis; pectore et abdomine læte flavis, remigibus brunneis castaneo marginatis; rostro colore corneo; tarsis pedibusque flavis.

Long. tot. 6, rostri a rictu ·5, alæ a carpo 2·1, caudæ 3·25, tarsi ·75 poll.

Hab. Colesberg, Cape Colony (*fide* E. L. Layard).

I have named this species after its discoverer, Mr. Ortlepp, a zealous cooperator with Mr. Layard. It bears the same relation to *D. pallida,* Smith (Ill. Zool. S. Afr. pl. 72. fig. 2) that *Phyllopneuste trochilus* does to *P. bonellii*—an analogy which seems to be found in the whole of the Sylviad group, there being usually a brown and a representative yellow species. The tarsi are *one-third* shorter than in *D. pallida.*

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* [This species does not seem to have been described. It was mentioned by Sir Andrew Smith (Ill. Zool. S. Afr., *Aves*, lp. to pl. 28), and a representation of it promised, which, however, never appeared.—ED.]

XIX.—*Remarks on* Dr. Stoliczka's "*Ornithological Observations in the Sutlej Valley.*" By ARTHUR Viscount WALDEN, P.Z.S. &c.

IN the 'Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal' for 1868, a paper has been published, entitled "Ornithological Observations in the Sutlej Valley, N.W. Himalayas," which deserves the attention and the study of the philosophical ornithologist. The author, Dr. Stoliczka, is a gentleman whose name is well known as that of a distinguished palæontologist and geologist. And this, I believe, his first ornithological contribution possesses merits more than sufficient to entitle him to a high place among scientific ornithologists. The accession to our ranks of of a recruit already so eminent in other branches of the natural sciences will be hailed with pleasure, and, by those who aim at higher objects than the mere priority of naming their species, with gratitude. The addition of another labourer in the but partially tilled field of Asiatic zoology will be welcome to the few, though happily increasing, workers in that much-neglected region of the earth's surface; while a perusal of Dr. Stoliczka's paper will show that it is possible for a naturalist primarily and chiefly occupied with a widely differing branch of research, to combine a record of practical zoological observations made in the field with an almost rigid accuracy of nomenclature.

An account of the collections made by Dr. Stoliczka, of which a translation appeared in this Journal for July last*, will already have enabled its readers to estimate his activity in the good cause. The collection there noticed was a general one of birds obtained in Tibet as well as in the Himalayas. The list I now propose noticing is confined to the species which inhabit a

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* Ibis, 1868, pp. 302–321.